

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 ACDA-07 AGRE-00

AID-05 CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 COME-00

DLOS-06 DOTE-00 EB-08 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FEAE-00

FMC-01 TRSE-00 H-01 INR-07 INT-05 IO-13 JUSE-00

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-01 OES-06 OMB-01 PA-01

PM-04 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAL-01 /130 W

-----251904Z 105862 /50

P 251650Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6177

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR PRIORITY

COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

EUCOM PRIORITY

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES ITALY PRIORITY

S E C R E T TUNIS 2049

CINCUSNAVEUR, COMSIXTHFLT, EUCOM PASS POLANDS

USDOCOSOUTH PASS CINCOSOUTH FOR POLAD

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PLOS PBOR LY IT TS

SUBJECT: TUNISIA PLANS NEW DRILLING ON CONTINENTAL
SHELF.

1. SUMMARY:

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I LEARNED TODAY THAT TUNISIA PLANS TO HAVE
NORWEGIAN DRILLING CONTRACTOR OPERATE AT SITE JUST NORTH
OF DISPUTED DRILLING LOCATION ON TUNISIAN-LIBYAN CONTINEN-
TAL SHELF. IT WAS MADE CLEAR TO ME BY MINISTER OF DEFENSE
THAT TUNISIAN NAVY WILL GUARD DRILLING OPERATIONS AND BE
PREPARED TO FIRE UPON ANY PARTIES INTERFERING WITH IT.
AT FOREIGN MINISTRY I RECEIVED STRONGLY-WORDED NOTE

WHICH HAD JUST BEEN HANDED TO ITALIAN AMBASSADOR REQUESTING
REMOVAL OF ITALIAN DRILLING SHIP, SCARABEO IV FROM
DISPUTED SITE WITHIN TUNISIAN JURISDICTION. END SUMMARY

2. I HAD BACK-TO-BACK APPOINTMENTS THIS MORNING WITH
TUNISIAN DEFENSE MINISTER ABDULLAH FARHAT AND EUROPEAN-
AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR AT FOREIGN MINISTRY NOURREDINE
EDJDOUB. WHILE TALK WITH FARHAT WAS PERIODIC TOUR D'HORIZON,
MINISTER PLACED SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON CONTINENTAL SHELF
DISPUTE WITH LIBYA AND UNSATISFACTORY CONVERSATIONS THEREON
WITH ITALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER LATTANZIO, WHO DEPARTED
TUNIS YESTERDAY AFTER TWO-DAY VISIT. TALK WITH MEDJDOUB
HAD BEEN INSTIGATED BY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTY (WHO DEPARTED
FOR EASTERN ARAB CAPITALS YESTERDAY) AND WAS ENTIRELY
DEVOTED TO CONTINENTAL SHELF QUESTION. MEDJDOUB HANDED
ME COPY OF NOTE DATED MARCH 19 PRESENTED TO ITALIAN
AMBASSADOR BY FOREIGN MINISTER REITERATING TUNISIA'S
POSITION ON ITS CLAIM TO TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION OVER
SITE WHERE ITALIAN SHIP, SCARABEO, IV, HAS BEEN DRILLING.
(COPY OF THIS IMPORTANT STATEMENT, AMOUNTED TO VIRTUAL
WHITE PAPER IS BEING TRANSMITTED TO SAME ADDRESSEES IN
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING SEPTTEL.)

3. DEFENSE MINISTER, USING MAP OF OFFSHORE AREAS
CONTAINING LIMITS OF VARIOUS TUNISIAN-GRANTED DRILLING
CONCESSIONS, INFORMED ME THAT SHORTLY TUNISIAN NATIONAL
OIL COMPANY (ETAP) WILL EMPLOY A NORWEGIAN DRILLING
CONTRACTOR TO PROBE NORTHERN LIMITS OF SUSPECTED LARGE
OIL BODY AT POSITION APPROXIMATELY 20 KMS. DUE NORTH OF
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SCARABEO DRILLING SITE (SEE TUNIS 1194). FARHAT EXPLAINED THAT
NEW SITE CHOSEN IS WELL WITHIN TUNISIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS
RECOGNIZED BY ITALIANS IN 1976 ACCORD.

4. FARHAT INFORMED ME THAT TUNISIAN DRILLING OPERATION
WILL BE PROTECTED BY TUNISIAN NAVAL VESSELS WHICH WILL HAVE
INSTRUCTIONS TO FIRE UPON ANYONE INTERFERING WITH DRILLING.
HE STRESSED THAT PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET
ARE ALL IN AGREEMENT CONCERNING ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF
ESTABLISHING TUNISIAN RIGHTS IN THIS AREA. NEITHER FARHAT
NOR MEDJDOUB COULD PROVIDE ME WITH EXACT MAP COORDINATES
FOR SITE AND MY ESTIMATED LOCATION, GIVEN ABOVE, IS ONLY
APPROXIMATE. ON FARHAT'S MAP, HOWEVER, IT WAS WELL WITHIN
TUNISIAN WATERS AS DELIMITED BY ITALO-TUNISIAN AGREEMENT.
IT IS PROBABLY ON LIBYAN SIDE OF MOST EXTREME LIBYAN
CLAIM.

5. MEDJDOUB, OBVIOUSLY UNAWARE OF MY PREVIOUS APPOINTMENT
WITH FARHAT, WAS SURPRISED BY DETAILED KNOWLEDGE I

EXHIBITED CONCERNING CONTINENTAL SHELF DISPUTE AND FLASH-POINTS INVOLVED. FURTHERMORE, I DO NOT BELIEVE HE WAS AWARE OF THE APPARENT TOP-LEVEL DECISION TO UNDERTAKE NEW DRILLING REGARDLESS OF CONSEQUENCES.

6. COMMENT: IF TUNISIANS NOW CARRY OUT THEIR NEW DRILLING PLAN THEY WILL HAVE NEUTRALIZED ITALIANS, WHO HAVE ALREADY CONCEDED SITE TO BE WITHIN TUNISIAN WATERS. QADHAFI WILL BE OBLIGED TO "PUT UP OR SHUT UP." TUNISIAN WILL TO STAND UP TO QADHAFI WILL BE PUT TO TEST. A CLASH BETWEEN LIBYAN AND TUNISIAN NAVAL UNITS OR STRAFING BY LIBYAN PLANES OF DRILLING SHIP AND TUNISIAN NAVAL UNITS COULD SPARK A GENUINE CONFLAGRATION. I DID NOT ON THIS OCCASION DO MORE THAN EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT CONFRONTATION COULD BE AVOIDED, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE PROPOSED NEW DRILLING SITE IS WITHIN TUNISIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS BY OUR STANDARDS,

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TAKING INTO ACCOUNT MOST REMOTE AND UNINHABITED TUNISIAN ISLETS. IF DEPARTMENT HAS COMMENTS ON TUNISIAN PLANS TO DRILL ON SITE INDICATED, I SHALL BE HAPPY TO USE THEM AS MEANS OF KEEPING DIALOGUE GOING ON THIS DELICATE ISSUE.
MULCAHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONTINENTAL SHELF, PETROLEUM, EXPLORATORY DRILLING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 25-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TUNIS02049
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770103-0317
Format: TEL
From: TUNIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770320/aaaaaqwg.tel
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Litigation History:
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Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2991155
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TUNISIA PLANS NEW DRILLING ON CONTINENTAL SHELF.
TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, PBOR, LY, IT, TS
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8521d0b1-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
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22 May 2009
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